
Meeting	Economy and Place Policy and Scrutiny Committee
Date	21 March 2023
Present	Councillors K Taylor (Chair), Daubeney (Vice-Chair), Cuthbertson, Hook, Kilbane, Pearson and D Taylor
In Attendance	Graham Collett (York Bus Forum Vice-Chair) Niall McFerran (York Bus Forum Secretary) Flick Williams (York Bus Forum Accessibility Officer) Cllr D'Agorne (Executive Member for Transport) Michael Howard (Head of Active and Sustainable Transport) James Gilchrist (Director of Transport, Environment and Planning)

23. Declarations of Interest [17.34]

Members were asked to declare, at this point in the meeting, any personal interests not included on the Register of Interests or any prejudicial or disclosable pecuniary interest that they might have in respect of the business on the agenda. There were none.

24. Public Participation [17.35]

It was reported that there had been no registrations to speak under the Councils Public Participation Scheme.

25. York Bus Service Improvement Plan [17.35]

Members considered a report that set out the Governments development of National Bus Strategy and the Councils response of developing an Enhanced Partnership and then preparing a Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) which secured £17.3 million pounds of funding for the cities bus services which was received in November 2022. The report also detailed the progress towards delivery, the primary focus of which had been on safeguarding current services.

In attendance at the meeting was the Executive Member for Transport and from York Bus Forum were Graham Collett (Vice-Chair), Niall McFerran

(Secretary) and Flick Williams (Accessibility Officer). The Executive Member was also in attendance, and the Head of Active and Sustainable Transport and Director of Transport, Environment and Planning were in attendance to present the report.

Niall McFerran welcomed the BSIP funding and suggested that it needed more detail and more of a plan. He noted that buses were crucial for York and provided a reduction in pollution and congestion on the city. He noted the importance of providing a reliable bus service and that too many people in the city wanted to catch a bus but couldn't as the buses were unreliable. He added that buses were of critical importance to the city.

Graham Collett noted that there should be a focus on supported services and an enhanced bus partnership. He explained that the council was supporting three bus services from the BSIP funding. He added that it was unclear who would run and what level of service there would be for the no12 bus route. He noted a number of cancellations with that route the previous Wednesday to Saturday and there had been other cancellations from the same operator. He asked why they could not implement conditions in the contract and scrutinise bus services. He asked if the enhanced partnership was fit to work if there was no user engagement.

Flick Williams noted that the Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) did not meet the social model of disability. She suggested that cuts to bus services were inevitable and she asked if there was funding to enhance real time information and accessibility. Regarding the EIA she noted that some disabled and older people were still cautious of Covid. She noted that the last section of the EIA suggested that groups such as York Bus Forum were being held to do the 'heavy lifting'. She noted the need for clean, regular, reliable and accessible buses.

The Head of Active and Sustainable Transport outlined the report detailing the BSIP funding. With reference to the no 12, 13 and 4112 bus services, the Director of Transport, Environment and Planning noted that those services were not being supported at the expense of others and that there was flexibility in those contracts. The Head of Active and Sustainable Transport explained that returning people back to buses was important to the BSIP and the bus network had been stabilised. In relation to investment in real time bus screens he noted that they had been trialled in a number of areas. The Director of Transport, Environment and Planning added that bus priority measures were a priority of BSIP and the council was in the process of starting a period of procurement for bus services.

In response to questions, officers explained that:

- York "MADE" it was language used by the Department for Transport (DfT).

- The funding as detailed in paragraph 25 of the report.
- There was £1.35million funding for bus services.
- The base service for the no12 bus route was usage as calculated by the bus operator.
- There was £17.35million funding for the full term of the BSIP, some of which had been allocated and some to be rolled over to 2023/24 spend. Officers undertook to email Members information on the funding.
- In order to maintain and stabilise networks and address the shortage of drivers, providers were operating revised timetables.
- There had been a shortage of drivers and a reduction in use and patronage. The council was working with operators to return to more regular timetables, which was last normalised before Covid and was yet to return to pre Covid levels with an 85% return to usage at present.
- The council monitored lost milage, and where services were missed they would pick this up with providers.
- The hospital bus was a contract between the First Bus and the NHS.
- The council would work with operators on expanding the multi modal hubs and real time information screens.
- Regarding the suggestion that monitoring lost milage was not adequate, the council contracts with operators was based on lost milage and an enhanced partnership officer would be employed to work on that.
- The advice of the Monitoring Officer was that no stakeholders could be on the operational delivery group when the BSIP was presented to Executive in 2021. The Executive Member for Transport explained the consultation on the BSIP that had been undertaken.
- £1.29 million would buy 100 real time screens.
- Officers explained the governance of the enhanced partnership within legal frameworks.
- The Department of Transport (DfT) was looking at alternative funding for the end of government double support in June 2023.

[Cllr Hook left the meeting at 19.03]

- The works on Tadcaster Road were part of the TCF, not BSIP programme.
- Officers confirmed that the detail of the BSIP programme could be shared with Members.
- The reallocation of road space to bus space would be taken away by consultants to draw up proposals which would include consideration of cycling and walking. The identification of corridors was led by bus operators.
- The DfT bus reform team had visited York as part of the assessment for BSIP and the DfT would undertake benchmarking on it.

- The new electric buses had space for one wheelchair and one multi use space and this was decided by the operator.
- External consultants were leading on a city centre bus study.
- The Director of Transport, Environment and Planning undertook to check if the BSIP funding included mandatory training for bus staff.

[Cllr Pearson left the meeting at 19.27]

Resolved: That it be recommended that;

- i. The Executive Member and officers note the accuracy of real time information
- ii. The Executive Member and officers note the review of performance monitoring and mileages
- iii. The Executive Member request daily bus passenger information.

Reason: In order to improve bus services.

, Chair

[The meeting started at 5.30 pm and finished at 7.40 pm].